

# Sermon Series Notes

## REDEMPTION

A STUDY IN EZRA



## "Life Lessons From A Great Leader" (Ezra 8)

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### I. THE TEXT

v.15 The Levites were vital to the mission

\* Lev.10: 11 and you (Levites) must teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses."

\* Deut.33: 10 He (Levi) teaches your precepts to Jacob and your law to Israel. He offers incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar.

\* See II Sam.6:6-8; I Chron.15:13

vv.21-23 Ezra knew the potential hazards that could take place on this 900 mile journey, so he proclaimed a fast.

vv.24-27 This is one of the reasons Ezra was led to proclaim a fast. This was a lot of loot! They could have easily been robbed along the way.

### II. LESSONS

#### A. When You Do Something For God, Do It Right

##### 1. In the prescribed way

\* By the book

##### 2. With excellence

\* Col.3: 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men

\* See Living Above The Level Of Mediocrity

\* I like it when things in the church are done with excellence.

\* The bitterness of poor quality lingers long after the sweetness of cheap price.

## B. Make Prayer A Priority

\* With a task of this magnitude, Ezra proclaimed a day of fasting and prayer.

\* Mark 9: 29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting (verse not in the NIV).

\* Nick Long's first year in Germany - just prayed

\* We are on a journey together, and we have something to build Would you fast with me and ask the Lord to provide the finances to complete Phase II without borrowing any money? How about next Wednesday? Communion is that night

## C. Maintain Integrity When Dealing With Financial Matters

### 1. Accountability

- II Cor.8: 20 We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift.

21 For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

- CCSP financial accountability

### 2. If you're married, disclose all financial info to your spouse

### 3. Live by a budget, even though your government does not!

- If Ezra had a credit card, he would not have used it (unless he had the means to pay it off when he got the bill). I have a rule that I pay off my credit card every month. I have family members who have gotten into terrible problems with credit cards.

- Start with the essentials; so many people I have counseled over the years keep non-essentials in their budget (if they even have a budget), and many are not willing to part with the non-essentials in order to make ends meet.

### 4. Honor the Lord with the firstfruits of all your increase (Prov.3:9).

\* See II Cor.8 notes

## D. When The Lord Grants Success, Be Sure To Thank Him (vv.35-36).

\* See Luke 17:12-19

\* Col.3: 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

\* I used to thank God regularly for Honey Nut Cheerios. Now I thank him for oatmeal; It's also become a habit as soon as I wake up to thank Him for another day to live

## CONCLUSION

Ezra is a great example for us, and he was a great leader. He went at the task God gave him to do with the intention of doing it by the book, and with excellence. He made prayer a priority, even fasting & prayer because of the magnitude of the mission. He was a man of integrity when it came to money. And when the Lord granted him success he made sure he offered God an offering of thanksgiving.